

The Franklin Inn
(and Store)
Port Republic, Atlantic County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-663

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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The Franklin Inn
(and Store)
Port Republic, Atlantic County, New Jersey

Owner: Daniel Knauer
Occupant: Mrs. H.S. Sander

Dates of Erection: Franklin Inn 1778 (frame bldg.);
Store 1827 (brick bldg.)

Builders: (Original Owners) Daniel Mathis (Franklin Inn);
Jonas Miller (brick store)

Present Condition: Carefully restored; front entrance doorway of store removed to new stairhall as common entry to the two buildings combined as a large residence by present owner. Other alterations as indicated on drawings and photographs.

Number of Stories: Two and one-half over basement

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - stone masonry
Exterior walls - frame clapboarded in the Inn; brick in the store
Interior walls - brick partywall; frame partitions
Chimneys - brick, built into inside of gable end walls
Roof - gable, wood shingled (not original material)

Historical Data:

The present owner of the former Franklin Inn, a frame building, and of the Miller Store, a brick one, having connected them by a new entrance vestibule serving both, they are here surveyed as a unit. The two structures have been under a common ownership, as described in the following cited

accounts and as evidenced by the land and probate records.

(Quote) Port Republic. The hotel at Chestnut Neck, which with other buildings was burned by the British in October 1778, was kept by Daniel Mathis. After his loss, Mr. Mathis built the Franklin Inn at Port Republic, which is still standing, near the dam. His son-in-law Jonas Miller afterwards became proprietor of the old inn and conducted it successfully for several years. His four daughters, all beautiful and accomplished in their day, married hotel keepers and passed their mature years in other places. Jonas Miller afterwards removed to Cape May and built Congress Hall, which was a famous hostelry at that resort before the Civil War. (a)

Daniel Mathis, builder of the Franklin Inn in 1778 and proprietor thereof as stated in the above account, must have resigned that position to his son-in-law by 27 April 1824 and removed to Little Egg Harbor, Burlington County^(b) for he describes himself as of that place at that date of a deed by which he conveys to Jonas Miller of Galloway Township, Gloucester County, for \$1000 two pieces of land. "The first is a House and lot of land situated at Wrangeborough* in the township of Galloway", the property lines being described as beginning "where a forked white oak stood, about one chain north of where the old grist mill formerly stood," thence north 2.62 chains, thence south 83 degrees west 6 chains, thence south 10 chains to Macote Creek, thence east down the creek to the lower side of the mill dam, thence north 3 degrees west 11.6 chains to the beginning, and as containing one acre. The other tract conveyed was 20 acres of

(a) A.M. Weston, South Jersey A History 1664-1824, p. 765. The Daily Union History of Atlantic City and Atlantic County, 1900, p. 95.

(b) The will of Daniel Mathis was proved 1824 Burlington Co. He had married in 1786 Phoebe Smith, daughter of Micaiah Smith (1742-1807) of Port Republic.

*Name since changed to Port Republic.

salt marsh on Blood Island in Mullica River,
Little Egg Harbor Township, Burlington County.

Having thus in 1824 come into possession of the Franklin Inn which possibly he had operated for a few years previously in succession to Daniel Mathis, this grantee Jonas Miller according to another account(c) was the builder in 1827 of the brickstore of brick burned on Tub Street Road nearly opposite Peter Strickland's place, which store forms a unit of the property here surveyed. The same account states further that "while Mr. Cake was running the stage he married Susanna, the second daughter of Jonas Miller, and their first housekeeping was in the second story of the brick store." This occupancy is evidenced by the frame stairway which until the recent alterations existed on the outside of the north wall of the building as the only means of access to and from the second story.

By deed of 1st November 1856, Stephen Colwell and wife Sarah B. of Philadelphia conveyed to Elias Wright of Galloway Township, Atlantic County*, New Jersey, "First all that land and premises which was conveyed to Jonas Miller by three separate deeds, two from Obadiah Huntley, one dated 9 June 1827 and one dated 4 April 1828, the other deed from under the hand of Daniel Mathis dated 27 April 1824, containing 3.55 acres more or less, and from Jonas Miller the same descended by diverse good conveyances unto the aforesaid Stephen Colwell."

Sixteen days after acquiring the property, this Elias Wright of Galloway Township by his deed of 17 November 1856 conveyed to Sarah Ashley of the same place for \$1600 "All those lots of land, houses and buildings in or about Unionville* that Elias Wright purchased of Stephen Colwell viz. One lot containing a brick store house and other buildings, and one lot containing two dwelling houses and a blacksmith shop, and also one wharf situated on a ditch leading into Macott Creek."

*This village in Galloway Twp. was known successively as Gravely Run, Wrangleborough, Unionville and Port Republic. Atlantic County was created 1837 from parts of Gloucester.

The grantee Sarah Ashley, being still of Galloway Township and supposedly occupying either the inn or the store thus acquired, conveyed to Rollin M. Ashley of same place for \$1400 by her deed of 9 February 1888 the one acre tract there, reciting the title from Daniel Mathis as above outlined.

By deed of 25 March 1896, this Rollin M. Ashley conveyed to David B. Ashley, both being of Galloway Township, for \$1200 tracts of land including that on which stood the two buildings here surveyed. This grantee was occupying the store in 1907, says his statement cited in (c).

Finally, by deed of 22 October 1936, Maurice C. Ashley and others, heirs of David B. Ashley of Galloway Township, deceased, conveyed to Daniel Knauer of Atlantic City for \$900 "All that certain tract or parcel of land situated in the city of Fort Republic", of one acre, with description of the property lines the same as those in the deed of 1824 from Daniel Mathis as first above cited, "with all and singular the buildings". Mr. Knauer, a building contractor, remains as owner and occupant of the premises at the time of our survey of the two buildings in July 1940, he having restored and connected them to compose one large residence.

Reference:

A search of title in Land and Probate records of Gloucester and of Atlantic Counties by Oscar F. Benjamin, H.A.B.S. research editor, reported 22 August 1940

Levin D. Cook
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.H.S.
District Officer